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CPW Report No. 54 -- USSR

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REPUBLICAN PARTY CONGRESSES

Moldavian SSR: A significant point of the Moldavian Party Congress (18-21 September) was the criticism directed at the principal speaker, First Secretary of the Central Committee Brezhnev, as soon as he finished his report. Kozyrev and other delegates even went so far as to suggest that "the speaker's affirmations do not reflect the true state of affairs" (utverzhdania dokladchika ne otrazhayut istinnogo polozhenia). The performance of the Moldavian Communist Party, it is claimed, does not justify the expectations of industry, agriculture or the people in general. The Central Committee "has relaxed its attention" (oslabil svoye vnimanie) to the subordinate Party organizations despite the recent establishment of administrative okrugs and okrug Party organizations which are designed to make their supervision easier. Secretary Kryzhanovskiy of the Beltsy Rayon Committee pointed out that although the officials of the new Okrug Party Committees are still unable to cope with major Party issues, let alone supervise the rayon committees, the Central Committee has never rendered them the assistance they need. It is said also to have discontinued the practice of calling Party "active" meetings at frequent intervals, which brought about "a lowering of the level" (snizhenie urovnya) of political and organizational work within the Party.

Brezhnev's attempts at self-vindication and whitewashing some of his Central Committee colleagues are said to have "puzzled" most of the Congress delegates. That his report merely skimmed the surface of Moldavian Party's failings was pointed out by a number of unnamed delegates who were also highly critical of the Secretary's failure to face the unpleasant facts and pin the responsibility where it belongs. One of the most serious shortcomings aired at the Congress was the inept handling of Party personnel matters. Lack of attention to this aspect of Party activities is seen in the large number of mediocre persons to be found in "positions of leadership" (rukovodiashchie posty), on the one hand, and the enormous "cadre turnover" (smenaemost kadrov), on the other. Central Committee Secretary Lazarev and some of his unnamed colleagues in charge of Party personnel have neglected their duties to such an extent as to make it possible for "unworthy people" (nedostoinie ludi) to worm their way into the leadership of city and even rayon Party Committees. This assertion is heavily supported by reports from Romanovskiy, Kalarashskiy, Sorokskiy, and certain other (nekotorie drugie) rayons as well as from the Kishinev City Party Committee.

Secretary Lazarev's chief fault, however, is his failure to do a good job "in the selection and appointment of cadres to the important sectors of ideological work" (v podbore i rasstanovke kadrov na vazhnykh uchastkakh ideologicheskoy raboty). This, some delegates pointed out, accounts for the prevalence of the above-mentioned unworthy people within the Party, whose contribution to ideological advancement is highly dubious. Secretary Brezhnev is belabored also for having omitted any reference to Lazarev, who, incidentally, did not even take the floor at the Congress.

"Poor guidance of the press" (plokhoye rukovodstvo pechatyu), the Moldavian Congress learned, is not an isolated instance of Party failure. Attention is called to the conspicuous lack of ideological criticism in the chief Republic's papers, particularly MOLDOVA SOCIALISTA. Hardly a worthwhile article on basic ideological issues has been published in the past year. Nor do these newspapers appear to be anxious to criticize any of the Ministries or other top-level Republican institutions.

Writers and art workers came in for their share of criticism for the failure to portray "Soviet reality" as it should be, and for being behind the times in general:

...Moldavian writers and art workers still fail to notice many new facets of our reality, do not portray vividly enough in their works the growth and development of the individual in a socialist society.

Russian text:

...pisateli i rabotniki iskusstv Moldavii ne zamechayut eshche mnogikh novykh yavleniy nashei deistvitelnosti, nedostatochno yarko pokazyvayut v svoikh proizvedeniakh rost i formirovaniye cheloveka sotsialisticheskogo obshchestva.

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Lack of originality is imputed to the Republic's composers, who, it is stated, prefer to confine their creative activities to the mere "adaptation" (obrabotka) of folklore and other existing "people's creations" (narodnoye tvorchestvo). Stage production and native music on the whole are said to be below the required level, and whatever successes have been achieved in those fields have now become insignificant in view of the "growing demands" of the people.

It is apparent from Orekhov's account of the Moldavian Party Congress, carried by PRAVDA on 23 September, that Party and ideological issues claimed considerably more attention than did industry or agriculture. There is in fact no reference to any industrial activities while discussion of agriculture is limited to a few familiar shortcomings. Delegate Volnyanskiy declared that both the Central Committee of the Party and the Council of Ministers are guilty of inadequate attention to the economy of south Moldavia. Others rebuked the various Ministries for their lack of attention to "the needs of the interior rayons", although the nature of these "needs" (nuzhdy) is not specified. Complaints were also heard of the utter neglect of the Republic's arid districts, particularly the Kagul Okrug. The Central Committee had not seen to it that these semi-desert areas are provided with the necessary irrigation facilities. In Chadyr-Lungskiy Rayon, for example, where irrigation canals were dug and the necessary machinery delivered to the spot, the equipment is still piled up on the ground for lack of qualified workers to install and operate it.

Belorussian SSR: In his report to the 20th Party Congress (23 September) Secretary Patolichev devoted an equal amount of attention to Party activities and to agriculture, with a few disparaging references to industrial production. Admitting that the Belorussian Party machine, from the Central Committee down, is still creaking in a number of places, the speaker suggested a "broader base" as one of the cures for the ailing organization. Certain sections of the population, he infers, have been discriminated against in the matter of admission to Party membership:

It is necessary to work for a further improvement in the matter of admission to the Party, and to enroll peasants and members of the intelligentsia who are conscious, active and devoted to the cause of Communism.

Unlike some of his counterparts in other Constituent Republics, Patolichev did not attempt to place a major part of the responsibility for Party failings on the Central Committee or any of its members. His occasional references to that body were vague, and its only fault stressed was the familiar "lax supervision" of everybody else's business. Pustovalov's account of the Congress (26 September, not broadcast), however, was more poignant. According to him, the Central Committee of the Belorussian Communist Party was castigated by the Congress delegates for its "superficial, arm-chair supervision" (poverkhnostnoye, kabinetnoye rukovodstvo) of industry and agriculture, and Secretary Abrasimov was singled out as the chief culprit. The Central and oblast Party Committees, they averred, even showed an amazing "lack of qualification" in the management of their own affairs, that is, the overall supervision of rayon and primary Party activities.

Agriculture in the Republic, Patolichev declared, is in a sorry state of affairs and it is therefore "necessary to introduce order" (neobkhodimo navesti porядok) into the collective farms. An end must be put to the persistent "criminal attitude" (prestupnoye otnoshenie) toward the quality of agricultural work which has been displayed in "numerous instances." Pustovalov's article amplifies the point by asserting that the direct result of that bad quality is that "many collective farms...are gathering poor harvests" (mnogie kolkhozy...sobirayut nizkie urozhai), and that livestock productivity is "similarly low" (takzhe nizka). The Minister of Agriculture Kostyuk is taken to account for his "loss of contact with the kolkhozes and machine-tractor stations" (otryv ot kolkhozov i MTS) and for turning the Ministry into a mere fact-finding organization. The Central Committee's share in the mismanagement of agriculture is eloquently described by Minsk delegate Mazurov in his reference to the Committee's Agricultural Division, which is theoretically the highest agricultural authority in the Republic:

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In our oblast...we are almost never conscious of the activities of the Agricultural Division of the Central Committee of the Belorussian Communist Party. The only reminder of that organization is the stream of decisions and orders on various agricultural questions.

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Russian version:

U sebya v oblasti...my pochti ne oschuschayem deyatelnosti sel'skokhoziaistvennogo otdela TsK KP(b) Belorussii. Ob etom otdele napominayet lish potok postanovleniy i rasporyazheniy po razlichnym voprosam sel'skogo khoziaistva.

Industry is treated far less extensively than the other branches of Belorussian economy, while heavy industry is not even mentioned. The only ministries rebuked for laggard performance are those producing for the consumers--the Local and Light Industries, Building Materials, Housing Construction and Meat and Dairy Industries. No details, however, are offered as to the nature of their shortcomings beyond the repeated assertions that their services to the consumers remain unsatisfactory. Of some significance in this connection is the fact that the Minister of the Food Industry Sysoyeva joined the other delegates in the criticism of the Central Committee's faulty approach to the solution of production problems, presumably food production. The Central Committee officials, they said, show a scant knowledge of production technique, seldom visit plants, and "are guided mostly by summary reports and telephone conversations" (chashche vsego rukovodstvuyutsya svodkami i telefonnyimi razgovorami). The Vitebsk town industry, for example, has been behind the rest of the Republic for a long time, and is still unable to catch up with the other cities. Disregard for the consumers' welfare is brought out also, inferentially in the case of the Belorussian Council of Ministers. Acting on the complaint of the Mogilev Town Party Committee in 1949, the Central Committee is said to have instructed the Council of Ministers to take immediate steps to improve the welfare services of that city. According to Sikorsky, Secretary of the Mogilev Party organization, no assistance has been rendered to that city as yet--3 years after the Council of Ministers was instructed to do so. The consumer is still getting a raw deal because, as delegate Golodushko succinctly puts it:

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A large number of enterprises in the Republic are not working smoothly, are failing to achieve their production plans from year to year and allowing rejects... First-class techniques are put on ice here and there and handicraft work methods resorted to.

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Russian version:

V respublike bolshoye chislo predpriyatiy rabotayet neritmichno, iz goda v god ne bypolnyaet proizvodstvennykh planov, dpuskayet brak... Koe-gde konserviruyetsya pervoklassnaya tekhnika i nasazhdayetsya kustarnichestvo.

Pustovalov undoubtedly reflects the official line when he says that a "Stalin-like solicitude" (stalinskaya zabota) for the Soviet consumers still characterizes the Party and Government attitude towards them. The Central Committee and Council of Ministers, it is true, have not been doing their best to ease the lot of the man on the street, but they are guilty only to a certain extent. Much of the trouble in the food and other consumer industries, it appears, is traceable to crooks and thieves among the officials:

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Adventurers, swindlers and squanderers of socialist property have for a long time exercised leadership over such Republican organizations as the Belorussian Industrial Council, the Grain Procurement Administration, the Main Fish Marketing Administration, the Small-River Administration, and certain others.

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Russian version:

Vo glave ryada respublikanskikh organizatsiy--Belpromsoveta, "Zagotzerno", Glavvrybsbyta, Upravleniya malykh rek i nekotorykh drugikh--dolgoye vremya podvizalis prokhodimtsy, zhuliki, raskhititeli sotsialisticheskoy sobstvennosti.

Ideological affairs, mentioned in passing by Patolichev, get a little more attention in PRAVDA's account of the Congress. There is oblique reference to great shortcomings uncovered recently in certain philosophical and literary works. Similar unspecified failings are attributed to the various arts. At least four of the delegates are quoted as questioning the ideological progress of many of the Republic's scientific-research institutions which, they pointed out, "are still behind the demands placed on them" (vse eshche otstayut ot predvyavlyayemykh trebovaniy). Delegate Krasovskiy intimated that in his opinion the greatest shortcoming in the work of the Belorussian Party is the inadequate ideological indoctrination of the rank-and-file Communists and the people in general. The Republic's 1,700 full-time and part-time lecturers and agitators have not materially changed their methods of political enlightenment, and many of them still display a great deal of "formalism and uncritical attitude" (formalizm i nachetnichestvo) in their treatment of ideological themes.

Turkmenian SSR: The Sixth Congress of the Turkmenian Communist Party was addressed by First Secretary of the Party's Central Committee Babayev. The chief target of criticism in his review is corruption within the Party, but agriculture and ideological aberrations are also subjected to detailed criticism. The Central Committee of the Party and its officials, he said, have still not mastered the art of "properly combining party-political and economic leadership" (pravilnoye sochetanie partiynno-politicheskoy i khozaistvennoy raboty). This is referred to as a violation of both Party and State discipline, since the tendency of Party officials to "take over" economic management reduces their functions to petty administrative matters (melochnaya opeka) while the various Ministers and other industrial executives thus appear to be absolved of their responsibilities to the State. Another vulnerable point in Party activities, according to the speaker, is the "improper" (nepравilnyi) selection and appointment of Communist executives to various responsible jobs, particularly in the ideological sector. It is personal friendship, blood-relationship and similar un-Bolshevik considerations that usually determine the selection of high officials. That is why Turkmenia's scientific institutions were found "to be fouled up with alien elements" (nauchnye uchrezhdeniya Turkmenistana okazalis zasorennymi chuzhdymi elementami).

According to Polyakov's PRAVDA account of the Congress (24 September), some of the delegates roundly criticized the Central Committee's secretaries, including Babayev, for his unfavorable attitude to criticism from below. Cited in this connection is the case of delegate Karamov who made some "critical remarks" (kriticheskie zamechaniya) to the Congress Presidium about Babayev's shortcomings. Replying for the Presidium, Second Secretary Sennikov reworded Karamov's complaints in such a way as to make them sound completely uncritical. A host of "so-called indispensable people" (tak nazyvayemye nezamenimye ludi) has made its appearance in the Republic, says the PRAVDA report. These ill-starred officials, it is claimed, are never ousted from the Party or industrial management in spite of their incompetence--having proved a failure in one job, they are quietly shifted to another position of equal or even greater responsibility. One delegate disclosed to the Congress that Secretary of the Andreyevsky Rayon Party Committee Ilbayev, who had been removed from his post for "unbecoming behavior" (nedostoynoye povedenie), was recommended by the Central Committee for the job of manager of the Republic's Wine Trust. The Congress delegates are said to have been "puzzled" (v nedoumenii) to hear Central Committee Secretary Sennikov justify that move by declaring that

Ilbayev was removed not because he failed in his work but because of unbecoming behavior.

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Russian version:

Ilbayev snyat ne za proval raboty, a za nedostoynoye povedenie.

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Agriculture is referred to as a very slow branch of Turkmenia's economy, and here again the Party is blamed for failing to liquidate the unspecified "numerous shortcomings." No figures are cited for this branch of production, but the ambiguous reference to its last year's performance is significant:

Last year the Republic as a whole completed its planned cotton deliveries to the State. However, 53% of the collective farms did not achieve their assignments.

Russian version:

V proshlom godu respublika v tselom vpolnila plan sdachi khlopka gosudarstvu, odnako 53% kolkhozov s etoy zadachey ne spravilis.

The modernization of the Republic's obsolete irrigation system, it was pointed out, has not gone far beyond the blueprint stage because the Waterways Administration has been behind the irrigation construction plan for years. Delegate Babayeva of Ashkhabad Oblast complained that the oblast's cattle industry has been unable to cope with the prescribed plan "for several years running" (neskolko let podryad), and that the appeals for help to the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers have brought no response. "We probably lack the ability to get to the bottom of the trouble", she concluded.

In the field of ideology, Turkmenia's progress is reported to be much slower than the Party would like to see it. Serious shortcomings, says Babayev, still characterize much of the work of the Republic's Academy of Sciences and its institutes, the Writers and Composers unions. Some of the historians, among them Nepesov, appear reluctant to change their bourgeois-nationalist views on Turkmenia's past. Nepesov's recent book on Soviet rule in northern Turkmenistan (1917-1936), published with the approval of the Central Committee, is said to be "thoroughly saturated with bourgeois nationalism" (naskvoz propitannaya burzhuaznym natsionalizmom). That this is not an isolated case is evident from the references to the Academy of Sciences and its various departments which "have not yet revised their work in the light of Stalin's historical works..." (eshe ne perestroili svoey raboty v svete istoricheskikh trudovtov. Stalina...)

Uzbek SSR: Secretary Nyazov's report to the 11th Congress of the Uzbek Communist Party is the only one that contains any reference to pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism. These are referred to in context of "nationalistic survivals" (natsionalisticheskie perezhitki) against which the Party is called upon to "wage a ruthless struggle" (vesti bezposhchadnyuyu borbu). Inferential evidence that the ideological situation in Uzbekistan is still very delicate, probably more so than in any other Asiatic Republic, is seen in Seluk's report from Tashkent carried in PRAVDA on 28 September:

It is characteristic that at the Congress itself only very few of the speakers referred in any way to questions of ideology.

Russian text:

Kharakterno, chto na samom syezde lish nemnogoe iz vystupavshikh v toy ili inoy mere kasalis voprosov ideologicheskoy raboty.

Secretary Nyazov's treatment of the ideological theme, on the other hand, is even franker than that of his colleagues in the other non-Russian Republics. It is also significant that he used the present instead of the past tense in his discussion of ideological sins. The sinister nature of nationalist survivals, if not exposed may undermine the very spiritual foundations of the Republic, he intimates. That some writers and historians are still retaining a secret admiration for the past is revealed in their "idealization" (idealizatsia) of the feudal period in Uzbek's history and in the "blurring" (zatushevyvanie) of class contradictions in pre-revolutionary Uzbekistan. But that is not all. What Nyazov apparently implies is that a sizable portion of the Republic's intelligentsia is still nursing national grievances arising out of Soviet domination, as may be seen in

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...their tendency to avoid mention or minimize the greatest role played by the Russian people and culture in the destinies of the Uzbek and other nations of the Soviet Union; in their attempts to somehow or other weaken the inviolable friendship of the peoples of our country.

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Russian version:

...v stremlenii oboyti libo priumensheet velichaishuyu rol russkogo naroda i ego kultury v sudbakh uzbekskogo i drugikh narodov Sovetskogo Soyuza, v popytkakh tak ili inache oslabit nerushimuyu druzhbu narodov nashei strany.

A report on the Uzbek Party Congress broadcast from Tashkent on 22 September, stated that in the view of some unnamed delegates the fight against bourgeois-nationalism and the other ideological aberrations mentioned above must be launched first within the Party itself and then broadened to include wider sections of the population.

Agriculture: Discussions of agricultural production are confined mostly to cotton growing, which is criticized as disappointing. Although charges of failures are leveled also at the Ministries of Agriculture and Waterways, the cotton situation is obviously a great deal worse than anticipated. Some of the delegates even doubted the authenticity of the current and past reports on cotton growing. The Congress was reminded, for instance, that in 1951 the Central Committee awarded the Red Banner to Fergana Oblast for its "exemplary achievements" in cotton-growing. A later and more thorough checkup revealed, however, that the said oblast did not complete its annual plan. Most of the speakers at the Congress, including the Chairman of the Council of Ministers Mukhitdinov, admitted that as the "main cotton base" (osnovnaya khlopkovaya baza) of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan has a long way to go before it can justify the country's expectations. (No specific facts or figures are mentioned)

Industrial production claims only perfunctory attention. There was in fact very little discussion of that topic beyond the mention that in 1951 many enterprises failed to cope with their planned assignments.

Kirghiz SSR: Monitored material on the Sixth Kirghiz Party Congress is not available, the only account of that event appearing in a Lukin dispatch from Frunze carried by PRAVDA on 27 September. Secretary of the Central Committee Razzakov's report dwelt on the brighter side of Kirghiz life, leaving all the criticism of Party and ideological activities to the Congress delegates. Industrial production is mentioned inferentially, in context of bureaucratic leadership from the Central Committee and Council of Ministers down. Delegates Gordeyev, Kosyakov and Senkevich declared that Central Committee and lower Party officials have practically lost all contact with the workers and engineering personnel of the plants and mines, and therefore are not familiar with the actual production situation of any given locality. Others asserted that the Council of Ministers is still "shielding" corrupt officials by quietly shifting them from one post to another. It was pointed out, for example, that Minister of State Control Aliev who had been removed from his job for "flagrant offences" (seryoznie prostupki) was recommended by the Council of Ministers for the post of Deputy Finance Minister. The Central Committee's addiction to paper work was described by delegate Dikambayev of Frunze Oblast. During the period under review (presumably since the Fifth Congress), he said, the Central Committee has sent a total of 1,800 decisions and directives to the oblast Committees, while the latter have been busy distributing a similar quantity of paper among the rayon and other subordinate Party organizations.

Ideologically, Kirghiz SSR has not made any commendable progress, according to Lukin. The Republic's scientific institutions, the Writers and Composers unions still get "unsatisfactory guidance" (neudovletvoritelnoye rukovodstvo) from the appropriate Party authorities. Such poor ideological leadership is said to account for the wrong

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views expounded by the Republic's historians who

...allowed an anti-historical and anti-Marxist approach to the treatment of the history of the Kirghiz people, embellished feudal relations, heaped praise on the khans, war lords...

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Russian version:

...dopustili antiistoricheskiy, antimarksistskiy podkhod k osveshcheniu istorii kirgizskogo naroda, priukrashivali feodalnie otnosheniya, voskhvalyali khanov, voennykh predvoditeley...

The chief of the Central Committee's Women's Section Konduchalova and the Secretary of the Kirghiz Komsomol are reported to have complained about the continued inferior status of women, and the lack of official attention to them. Feudal-tribal survivals (feodalno-rodovie perezhitki), they pointed out, have not yet been liquidated.

Latvian SSR: Unlike most of the Republican Party Congresses, the Latvian Congress devoted very little attention to the Republic's industry or agriculture beyond passing reference. Central Committee Secretary Kalnberzin merely pointed out that although the industry as a whole is working according to plan, a number of plants and factories "are unable to cope" (ne spravlyayutsya) with their production assignments. His report was more specific about Party and ideological shortcomings, the elimination of which, it was intimated, is long overdue. The Secretary stated early in his speech that the recent changes in the administrative subdivision of Latvia--from uyezds to oblasts--are designed to "draw the leading organs closer to the collective farms, enterprises and the working masses" (priblizit rukovodyashchie organy k kolkhozam, predpriyatiyam, k shirokim massam trudyaschikhsya), and to make Party and State administration more efficient.* These measures, however, have so far not justified official expectations since, as Kalnberzin remarks, the same old Party and Government bureaucrats have merely changed positions and titles, not their methods of work. This is particularly evident in the matter of admission to Party membership where "the race for greater numbers of members" (pogonya za kolichestvom prinyimayemykh) is frequently detrimental to the quality of the membership. The charge is heavily supported by the Secretary of the Riga Party Committee Malakhova, who stated bluntly that the Central Committee "has lately eased the requirements of Party cadres" (v posledneye vremya snizili trebovatelnost k partiynym kadram). A number of corrupt Communist officials, she said, have demonstrated their incorrigibility time and again "but they are still kept on the job" (odnako ikh prodolzhayut derzhat na rabote).

Drawing some comfort from "certain successes" (nekotorye uspekhi) on the ideological front, the Congress proceeded to scrutinize the Marxist situation in and out of the Party and found it wanting. The Central Committee of the Party, it is claimed, does not provide the necessary ideological leadership for the oblast and rayon Party Committees, and its political propaganda in general does not come up to the required level. The Committee's Propaganda and Agitation Department, some delegates indicated, "is not distinguished for its initiative" (ne otlichayetsya initsiativoy)--its members, including the manager Strod, seldom if ever visit any collective farms of other establishments.

Like their fellow professionals in the rest of the USSR, the Latvian historians and writers are allergic to criticism and self-criticism, which often accounts for their "politically immature works" (politicheski nezrelye proizvedeniya). Similar unspecified ideological shortcomings are said to apply also to the publication of text books and translations:

* As indicated elsewhere in this report, the establishment of administrative okrugs in Moldavian SSR was also said to have been prompted by considerations of efficiency.

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The Latvian publishing administration sometimes releases nonpolitical, nonideological, and inferior books and text books as well as inferior translations from Latvian into Russian and from Russian into Latvian.

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Russian version:

Latyshskoye izdatelstvo inogda vypuskayet apolitichnie, bezideinie, nedobrokachestvennie knigi i uchebniki, nepolnotsennie perevody kak s latyshshkogo na russkiy, tak i s russkogo na latyshskiy yazyk.

The membership of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, the Congress is informed, is not well enough educated, with only 22.5% of its scientific workers holding doctorate or candidates degrees. The Academy's plan for raising the qualifications of its members has not been fulfilled "from year to year" (iz goda v god).

It should be pointed out here that all the other Republican Congresses, though dwelling at some length on domestic ideological difficulties, made no reference to foreign anti-Soviet propaganda within the Soviet Union. The resolution adopted by the Latvian Party Congress on ideological matters, as reported by Loginov in PRAVDA on 24 September, is therefore significant. Beginning with the familiar instructions to the Central Party Committee to raise the level of the ideological enlightenment of the Party membership and the population, it calls on all the Republic's Party organizations

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...to raise the political vigilance of the population, intensify the struggle against the corrupt bourgeois ideology, against survivals of capitalism and decisively expose the misanthropic propaganda of the Anglo-American incendiaries of a new war.

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Russian text:

...povyshat politicheskuyu bditelnost naselenia, usilit borbu protiv rastlennoy burzhuaznoy ideologii, protiv perezhitkov kapitalizma, reshitelno razoblachat chelovekonenavistnicheskuyu propagandu amerikano-angliskikh podzhigatelei novoy voyny.

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